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EXAMINER

DAM, KIM LYNN

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2179

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/722,014	Applicant(s) BROWNHOLTZ ET AL.	
	Examiner Kim-Lynn Dam	Art Unit 2179	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 4/30/07.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. This office action is in response to the Amendment and Argument/Remarks filed on 4/30/07. **This action is made final.**
2. Applicant amended claims 1, 2, 5, 12, 20, 21, 30, and 31. Claims 1-40 stand rejected.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-3, 5-12, 14-27, 29-38 and 40 are rejected under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724), and in further view of Borwankar (USPN 6,594,693).

Regarding claim 1, Maurille disclosed a user interface for managing threaded on-line conversations and chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and branch messages corresponding to a message (Abstract, lines 1-5; Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4b-d;). However, Maurille did not specifically disclose a multi-column user interface with a first column for chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and a second column for displaying a branch of messages corresponding to a message selected in the first column. However, Newman disclosed the above limitation (Column 5, lines 3-11; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to

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one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Newman with the user interface of Maurille for the purpose of allowing users to easily view the corresponding threaded messages at more detailed levels and help users be aware of the thread context of each message of a conversation all in one interface (Newman, Column 1, lines 39-47). Neither Maurille nor Newman specifically disclosed a conversation map for illustrating relationships between messages in the conversation, wherein the conversation map changes according to the branch of messages displayed in the second column. However, Borwanker disclosed a directory of messages and conversations (Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6) which is updated to inform the user of the history of the message including messages that precede the current message, conversations, sub-conversations etc (Column 11, lines 30-42; Figure 6 (where directory would change according branch messages and conversations being added or deleted, as shown in steps 710 and 718 of figure 7)). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwanker into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwanker, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 2, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each of the set of messages may comprise content selected from the group consisting of text, images, files, links to other documents and links to websites (Abstract, lines 1-5, Figures 4b-d).

Regarding claim 3, the rejection of claim 2 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each of the set of message is represented by a name (Figures 4b-d, items 245 and 246).

Regarding claim 5, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated further, Maurille and Newman do not specifically disclose a conversation map illustrating and aiding navigation of a hierarchy of the set of messages in the conversation. However, Borwankar disclosed a directory of messages and conversations (Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwankar into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwankar, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 6, the rejection of claim 5 is incorporated and further Borwankar disclosed wherein a display attribute of the conversation map is altered based on a chronology of the set of messages. It is inherent that the directory of conversations and messages will automatically alter upon changing the index directory.

Regarding claim 7, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille does not specifically disclose a list of participants in the conversation. However, Maurille disclosed a thread participants table (Column 9, lines 15-30; Figure 2, item 148).

Maurille also disclosed a conference session where there is a list of participants displayed (Figure 7c, item 776) comprising of participants from the conference table (Column 9, lines 40-55; Figure 2, item 280). Therefore, it is obvious that the system of Maurille is capable of displaying the list of participants in a threaded conversation.

Regarding claim 8, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed comprising a list of other conversations related to the conversation (Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4d).

Regarding claim 9, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Newman disclosed a set of navigation buttons for navigating about the branch of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 10, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Newman disclosed wherein each message in the branch of messages is displayed in a separate region of the second column (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 11, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille does not specifically disclose wherein each message of the set of messages displayed in the first column has an associated indicator for indicating a quantity of predecessors and successors. However, Maurille does disclose a messages table which stores parent and child messages of threads (Column 8, lines 22-65; Figure 2 items 238 and 240).

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Therefore, it is inherent that the system of Maurille can display the quantity of predecessors and successors of a message.

Regarding claim 12, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages includes an associated in-line reply button (Column 4, lines 28-35; Column 20, lines 16-23).

Regarding claim 14, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein the first column is additionally represented by a vertical index, and wherein each message of the set of messages is represented in the vertical index at a position proportional to its time stamp in a chronological sequence of the set of messages (Figures 4b-d and 7b).

Regarding claim 15, the rejection of claim 14 is incorporated. In addition, the browser of Newman disclosed wherein the vertical index comprises a navigation aid that allows a user to move forward and backward in time to each of the set of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 16, the rejection of claim 14 is incorporated. In addition, the browser of Newman disclosed wherein each in a series of user inputs in the vertical index moves the first column one message forward or backward in the chronological sequence of messages (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 17, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed a third column for displaying hierarchical child messages of a message selected in the second column (Column 12, lines 31-40).

Regarding claim 18, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and Maurille disclosed displaying messages authored by a same participant (Column 12, lines 31-40).

Regarding claim 19, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and Maurille disclosed displaying messages authored by a same participant (Column 12, lines 31-40).

Regarding claim 20, Maurille disclosed a user interface for managing threaded on-line conversations and chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and branch messages corresponding to a message (Abstract, lines 1-5; Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4b-d;). However, Maurille did not specifically disclose a multi-column user interface with a first column for chronologically displaying a set of messages in a conversation and a second column for displaying a branch of messages corresponding to a message selected in the first column. However, Newman disclosed the above limitation (Column 5, lines 3-11; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Newman with the user interface of Maurille for the purpose of allowing users to easily view the corresponding threaded messages at more detailed levels and help users be aware of the thread context of each message of a conversation all in one

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interface (Newman, Column 1, lines 39-47). Neither Maurille or Newman disclose hierarchical levels and a conversation map for illustrating relationships between messages in the conversation wherein the conversation map changes according to the branch messages displayed in the second column. However, Borwankar disclosed a directory and subdirectory level of messages and conversations ((Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6) which is updated to inform the user of the history of the message including messages that preceed the current message, conversations, sub-conversations etc (Column 11, lines 30-42; Figure 6 (where directory would change according branch messages and conversations being added or deleted, as shown in steps 710 and 718 of figure 7). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwankar into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwankar, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 21, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Borwankar disclosed a conversation map illustrating and aiding navigation of a hierarchy of the set of messages in the conversation (Column 11, lines 7-42; Figure 6). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Borwankar into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily access a structured view of conversations (Borwankar, Column 11, lines 7-42).

Regarding claim 22, the rejection of claim 21 is incorporated and further Borwankar disclosed wherein a display attribute of the conversation map is altered based on a chronology of the set of messages. It is inherent that the directory of conversations and messages will automatically alter upon changing the index directory.

Regarding claim 23, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille does not specifically disclose a list of participants in the conversation. However, Maurille disclosed a thread participants table (Column 9, lines 15-30; Figure 2, item 148). Maurille also disclosed a conference session where there is a list of participants displayed (Figure 7c, item 776) comprising of participants from the conference table (Column 9, lines 40-55; Figure 2, item 280). Therefore, it is obvious that the system of Maurille is capable of displaying the list of participants in a threaded conversation.

Regarding claim 24, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed comprising a list of other conversations related to the conversation (Column 14, line 61 to Column 15, line 16, Figures 4d).

Regarding claim 25, Maurille and Newman substantially disclose the invention as claimed. In addition, Newman disclosed wherein each message in the branch of messages is displayed in a separate region of the second column (Figure 6).

Regarding claim 26, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille does

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not specifically disclose wherein each message of the set of messages displayed in the first column has an associated indicator for indicating a quantity of predecessors and successors. However, Maurille does disclose a messages table which stores parent and child messages of threads (Column 8, lines 22-65; Figure 2 items 238 and 240). Therefore, it is inherent that the system of Maurille can display the quantity of predecessors and successors of a message.

Regarding claim 27, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated in-line reply button (Column 4, lines 28-35; Column 20, lines 16-23).

Regarding claim 29, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and further Maurille disclosed a third column for displaying hierarchical child messages of a message selected in the second column (Column 12, lines 31-40).

Regarding claims 30-38 and 40, they are the corresponding program product claims of claims 1, 5-12 and 17. Therefore, claims 1, 5-12 and 17 are rejected under the same rationale as applied above.

3. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724) and Borwankar (USPN 6,594,693) and further in view of Baker (USPN 6,546,417).

Regarding claim 4, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and neither Maurille, Newman, nor Borwanker disclosed wherein each of the set of messages has an associated content icon indicating a type of content of the set of messages. However, Baker disclosed the above limitation (Abstract, lines 1-6; Column 6, line 59 to Column 7, line 17; Figure 2). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Baker into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily identify different kinds of messages and contents of a message since the icon indicates the type of file attached (Column 4, line 63 to Column 5, line 5).

4. Claims 13, 28 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille (USPN 6,484,196) in view of Newman (USPN 7,003,724) and Borwanker (USPN 6,594,693), and further in view of Tang et al. (USPN 5,793,365).

Regarding claim 13, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and neither Maurille, Newman, nor Borwanker disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated author icon. However, Tang disclosed author icons (Abstract, lines 1-17; Figures 2, 4 and 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Tang into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily

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identify activity levels and availability of participants in order to contact them (Abstract, lines 1-17; Column 3, lines 32-51).

Regarding claim 28, the rejection of claim 20 is incorporated and neither Maurille nor Newman disclosed wherein each message of the set of messages has an associated author icon. However, Tang disclosed author icons (Abstract, lines 1-17; Figures 2, 4 and 5). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the teachings of Tang into the combined user interface of Maurille and Newman for the purpose of allowing users to easily identify activity levels and availability of participants in order to contact them (Abstract, lines 1-17; Column 3, lines 32-51).

Regarding claim 39, it is the corresponding program product claim of claim 13.

Therefore claim 13 is rejected under the same rationale as applied above.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant is reminded that any citation to specific, pages, columns, lines, or figures in the prior art references and any interpretation of the references should not be considered to be limiting in any way. A reference is relevant for all it contains and may be relied upon for all that it would have reasonably suggested to one having ordinary skill in the art. In re Heck, 699 F.2d 1331, 1332-33, 216 USPQ 1038, 1039 (Fed. Cir.

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1983) (quoting *In re Lemelson*, 397 F.2d 1006,1009, 158 USPQ 275, 277 (CCPA 1968)).

6. Applicant's arguments filed 4/30/07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 1, 20 and 30 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection necessitated by amendment.

Conclusion

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kim-Lynn Dam whose telephone number is (571) 270-


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1408. The examiner can normally be reached on M-TH 8:00-5:30, every other Friday 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Weilun Lo can be reached on (571) 272-4847. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Kim-Lynn Dam


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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER